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Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with the request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-seventh session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting. The report describes the progress of work of the Committee of Experts; presents the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water (SEEAW) for adoption; and reports on the results of the first phase of the Global Assessment on Environment Statistics and Environmental-Economic Accounting. The Commission is requested to express its views on the progress of work of the Committee of Experts in the area of coordination and promotion and implementation of environmental-economic accounting, to encourage the implementation of SEEAW in countries and to advise on whether to adopt part I of SEEAW as a statistical standard.

* E/CN.3/2007/1.

** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2006, Supplement No. 4* (E/2006/24), chap I.B.

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Report of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting

Contents

		Paragraphs	*Page*
I.	Introduction	1–2	3
II.	Progress of work of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting	3–31	3
	A. Coordination	4–15	3
	B. Promotion and implementation	16–28	6
	C. Revision of SEEA-2003	29–31	8
III.	System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water	32–40	9
IV.	Global Assessment on Environment Statistics and Environmental-Economic Accounting: results of phase I	41–52	10
	A. Institutional infrastructure	44–48	11
	B. Scope of the programmes	49–50	13
	C. Impeding factors	51–52	13
V.	Points for discussion	53	13
Annex			
	List of countries that replied to phase I of the Global Assessment on Environment Statistics and Environmental-Economic Accounting as at 11 December 2006		15

I. Introduction

1. At its thirty-seventh session, in March 2006, the Statistical Commission:

(a) Took note of the report of the Secretary-General on environmental accounting (E/CN.3/2006/9) and endorsed the long-term objectives, the programme of work and the governance structure of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting;

(b) Encouraged the Committee of Experts to establish a website, hosted by the Statistics Division, that would serve as a knowledge-based platform so as to facilitate exchanges of best practices and the use of environmental-economic accounts;

(c) Requested the Committee of Experts to focus on the development and promotion of environmental accounting and to refine its working relationship with the various groups responsible for the development of environmental, energy and related statistics.

2. The present report is organized in three parts. Section II describes the progress of work of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting, in particular concerning the refinement of working relationship with other groups responsible for the development of environment, energy and related statistics. Section III presents the System of Environmental and Economic Accounting for Water (SEEAW) with the objective of seeking the Statistical Commission's encouragement on its implementation and advising on its adoption as a statistical standard. Section IV presents the results of phase I of the Global Assessment on Environment Statistics and Environmental-Economic Accounting. The points for discussion are contained in paragraph 53 of the present report.

II. Progress of work of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting

3. At its first meeting, held in New York from 22 to 23 June 2006, the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting discussed its role in the coordination of the activities of various groups active in environmental-economic accounting and related statistics, its strategy in the promotion and implementation of environmental-economic accounts and the revision process of the *Handbook of National Accounting: Integrated Environmental-Economic Accounting 2003*, commonly referred to as SEEA-2003. These topics are discussed in detail below.

A. Coordination

4. The Committee of Experts recognized the need for coordination of those activities that fall within its purview. To this end, in order to identify areas of common interest and the modality of cooperation, the Committee discussed the objectives, work programmes and activities of the various groups, namely the London Group on Environmental Accounting, the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics, the Working Group on Environmental Information and Outlooks of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Working Group on

Statistics for Sustainable Development and the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics.

1. London Group on Environmental Accounting

5. The London Group on Environmental Accounting has played over the years a leading role in advancing the methodologies on environmental-economic accounting and in providing a forum for sharing national and international expertise in the field. The most notable accomplishments of the London Group have been its contribution to SEEA-2003 and, more recently, to SEEAW, presented in section III below.

6. Given the expertise of the London Group and its leading role in environmental-economic accounting, the Committee of Experts requested the London Group to consider accepting a significant number of issues in the research agenda for the revision of SEEA-2003 as part of its programme of work. At its last meeting, held from 19 to 21 June 2006 in New York, the London Group discussed its governance structure and its role in the revision process of SEEA-2003 in order to meet the requests called for by the changes in the international statistical environment. At the meeting, it was agreed that the governance structure of the London Group would consist of a Chair, a secretariat and working groups coordinated by various members of the Group. Mark de Haan of Statistics Netherlands was elected as Chair of the London Group by acclamation.

7. In response to the request of the Committee of Experts, the London Group is in the process of agreeing, through an electronic consultation process, on a set of principles for the revision of the System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (SEEA), which will be submitted to the Committee of Experts for its consideration. One of the recommendations is that the scope of the revision of SEEA-2003 should be kept manageable with regard to the proposed timetable and resource requirements of all parties involved.

8. The next London Group meeting is scheduled to take place in Pretoria, South Africa during the week of 26 to 30 March 2007. It will discuss the main principles of the SEEA-2003 revision, an updated list of issues in the research agenda for the revision and issue papers on selected issues. The expected outcome of this discussion will be a detailed programme of work for the London Group with timelines and deliverables.

2. Oslo Group on Energy Statistics

9. The Oslo Group on Energy Statistics is responsible for contributing to improved international standards and improved methods for official energy statistics. The Group plans to revise the manual *Energy Statistics: definitions, units of measure and conversion factors* issued by the United Nations in 1986. Given the Group's mandate and programme of work, the Committee of Experts considered it essential that the Oslo Group take an active role in the revision of SEEA-2003. In order to avoid duplication of work and ensure full consistency between the energy statistics manuals and revised SEEA-2003, the Committee of Experts expects that the Oslo Group will take the lead in the development of methodologies on energy accounts. As a result, the Committee of Experts requested the Oslo Group to (a) develop a list of issues on energy accounts to be included in the research agenda for the revision of SEEA-2003; and (b) solve those issues on energy accounts that will be included in the research agenda approved by the Committee of Experts.

10. The Committee encouraged the Oslo Group to work in close cooperation with the London Group on Environmental Accounting and, in particular, with its Subgroup on Mineral and Energy Accounts. The Subgroup, chaired by Statistics Denmark, is currently developing a manual on mineral and energy accounts and will address the issues in the research agenda for the SEEA-2003 on the topic. The Subgroup is now focusing its efforts on mineral and energy asset accounts with the expectation that the Oslo Group will take on the chapter and issues on energy flow accounts. The Committee of Experts stressed the importance of coordination between the two groups to ensure that the classifications of flows and stocks be consistent.

3. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Working Group on Environmental Information and Outlooks: work on material flow accounts

11. In response to requests by Group of Eight (G8) Heads of State and Government, OECD is currently implementing the OECD Council's recommendation on material flows and resource productivity of April 2004 under the auspices of the OECD Working Group on Environmental Information and Outlooks and in cooperation with the OECD Working Group on Waste Prevention and Recycling. Part of the work consists in developing a guidance document to assist OECD member countries in implementing and using material flow accounts.

12. The Committee of Experts welcomed the work of OECD on material flow accounts. Although the focus of the *Guidance Manual on Measuring Material Flow and Productivity* is more on the policy applications of material flow analysis than on statistical methodology, the Committee of Experts considered it important that the concepts and methods presented in the guidance manual be consistent with the 1993 System of National Accounts and SEEA-2003 concepts. If a need to deviate from these concepts arises, for example, if the territory principle is embraced as opposed to the residence principle used in the national accounts, the changes should be explained and justified. Furthermore, bridge tables linking the suggested approach with SEEA-2003 should be developed.

13. In order to formalize cooperation and ensure consistency between the guidance manual and revised SEEA-2003, the Chair of the Committee of Experts has contacted OECD to ensure a common approach to the development of methodologies and practical guidelines on material flow accounts. The Committee of Experts welcomed the offer of OECD to lead the issues on the research agenda dealing with material flow accounts and encouraged the OECD to work with the London Group on addressing those issues.

4. Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics

14. The objective of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics is to firmly anchor environment statistics as part of official statistics by improving and strengthening basic environmental data. The Group has focused its activities on water statistics and, as a result of the Work Session on Water Statistics, held in Vienna from 20 to 22 June 2005, has established a subgroup with the objective of harmonizing terms and definitions on water used in the data collection activities of the Statistics Division of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), OECD/Eurostat and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) questionnaires and aligning them with those in SEEAW. The subgroup is

expected to analyse differences and similarities in terms and definitions and reach a consensus.

5. Joint Working Group on Statistics for Sustainable Development

15. The Working Group is a joint working group of OECD and the Conference of European Statisticians of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe with the objective of identifying good concepts and practices in order to assist national Governments and international organizations in the design of sustainable development indicator sets and in the development of official statistics in the area. Since SEEA-2003 is a framework that can be used for the measurement of sustainable development and for the development of sustainable development indicators, the Committee of Experts considered the objectives of the Working Group relevant to the revision of SEEA-2003 and requested the Working Group to update the Committee on the progress of its activities.

B. Promotion and implementation

16. The Committee of Experts recognizes the importance of promoting the implementation of SEEA in countries and of familiarizing and educating the users and producers of statistics from various communities on the applications of environmental-economic accounting. During the past year, the Committee has focused its efforts on (a) the development of a website that is a knowledge-based platform on environmental-economic accounting; (b) the launching of a global assessment on environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting; and (c) the organization of international conferences bringing together users and producers of statistics from different communities.

1. Website of the Committee of Experts

17. The website of the Committee of Experts[1] contains (a) papers and presentations discussed during the Committee meetings and the minutes of the meetings; (b) links to the websites of the various groups working on environmental-economic accounting and related statistics; (c) papers, presentations and reports of international conferences organized to promote environmental-economic accounts and its implementation; and (d) a searchable archive of publications on environmental-economic accounts.

18. The searchable web archive has recently been launched. It includes methodological publications and case studies on environmental-economic accounts, classified according to publisher, type of accounts (such as physical and hybrid flow accounts and asset accounts) and natural resources (such as water, forest, fish, mineral and energy and land).

19. The Committee of Experts recognizes that the website is a useful tool for disseminating environmental-economic accounts and it is expected that the website will be further developed to increasingly become a knowledge-based platform.

[1] The address of the Committee of Experts website is http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/ceea/default.asp.

2. Global Assessment on Environment Statistics and Environmental-Economic Accounting

20. To assist the Committee of Experts in developing a strategy for promoting the implementation of SEEA while taking into consideration the availability of environment statistics in countries, a Global Assessment on Environment Statistics and Environmental-Economic Accounting was launched under the auspices of the Committee. The Global Assessment mapped the current status of national implementation of environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting programmes in countries, provided an indication of impeding factors in the development of environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting and gave an indication of country priorities in their further development. The results of the assessment are presented in section IV of the present report.

3. International conferences

21. Two international conferences bringing together users and producers of environmental accounts and statistics from various communities were organized in 2006. The results of these conferences are briefly presented below.

(a) User-producer Conference: Water Accounting for Integrated Water Resource Management

22. The Conference was organized by the Statistics Division under the auspices of the Committee of Experts and hosted by Statistics Netherlands in Voorburg, the Netherlands, from 22 to 24 May 2006. The Conference, which gathered major users and producers of water information, raised awareness among the users and producers of water information of SEEAW as the hydrological-economic information system in support of integrated water resource management. The Conference identified policy questions and discussed how the water accounting framework would meet those needs.

23. The Conference endorsed SEEAW and recognized that it provides the much-needed conceptual framework for organizing hydrological and economic information in support of integrated water resource management. It recommended the adoption of SEEAW as the international standard for water statistics. This would provide momentum for its implementation by countries. As a result of the outcome of the Conference, the Committee of Experts considered the recommendation of the Conference and is asking the Statistical Commission to encourage the compilation of SEEAW in countries and to advise on whether to adopt SEEAW as a statistical standard subject to a possible re-evaluation taking into account consistency with the content and format of the revised SEEA-2003 (see also section III of the present report).

24. The Conference agreed to the creation of a Round Table on Water Accounting under the auspices of the Committee of Experts to follow up on the recommendations of the Conference. The Round Table objectives are (a) to promote SEEAW for the assessment and monitoring of hydrological-economic information in support of integrated water resource management; and (b) to advance the implementation and use of SEEAW in countries. The first meeting of the Round Table is expected to take place in the first quarter of 2007.

25. One of the outcomes of the User-Producer Conference was that the Chair of the Committee of Experts and the Statistics Division, as the main author of SEEAW, were invited to present the water accounting framework at the meeting of the UN-Water monitoring session in Stockholm on 21 August 2006. As a result, UN-Water is considering adopting SEEAW as the information system for the monitoring and assessment of hydrological-economic information in support of integrated water resource management.

(b) International Workshop on Ecosystem and Natural Capital Accounting

26. The Workshop, jointly organized by the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the Statistics Division, in Copenhagen, on 30 November and 1 December 2006, reviewed developments in ecosystem and natural capital accounting based on the conceptual framework of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, provided a forum to share experience with experts and stakeholders from different communities and explored synergies.

27. The Workshop welcomed the efforts of EEA to implement a Millennium Ecosystem Assessment for Europe by 2012 using SEEA, by bringing together information from different sources including from space earth observation programmes and monitoring networks. It identified methodological issues that need to be resolved in order to advance the research agenda and which will serve as useful input in the revision of SEEA-2003.

28. The Workshop considered SEEA as the necessary framework for measuring the interaction between the economy and the environment and a useful tool for monitoring the ecosystem services and the threats that ecosystems face as well as the possible consequences for economic development and well-being. SEEA was thus recognized as a valuable tool in support of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.

C. Revision of SEEA-2003

29. The Committee of Experts discussed the programme of work of various groups working in environmental-economic accounting and related statistics and identified synergies and areas of cooperation with the various groups. It is currently in the process of formalizing cooperation with the various groups, in particular concerning their contribution to the revision of SEEA-2003.

30. Upon request from the Committee of Experts, the Chair and secretariat are developing a project management framework that will delineate the role and responsibilities of the various groups involved in the SEEA-2003 revision process, the scope of the SEEA revision and the governance structure of the project.

31. The Committee of Experts agreed to appoint an Editor who would draft the revised SEEA on the basis of the text of SEEA-2003 and of the issue and outcome papers prepared by the various technical groups.

III. System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water

32. The System of Environmental and Economic Accounting for Water has been prepared by the Statistics Division in collaboration with the London Group on Environmental Accounting, in particular with its Subgroup on Water Accounting.

33. The preparation of SEEA-2003 provided an opportunity and a challenge to develop methodologies for water accounts. Although country experiences in water accounts at the time of writing SEEA-2003 were limited, commonalities in the approaches to compiling water accounts emerged. The section on water accounts in chapter 8 of SEEA-2003 is the first attempt to develop harmonized methodologies for water accounts.

34. Given the increasing policy relevance of water in the national and international agenda and country demands for guidance on the compilation of water accounts, the Statistics Division took on the task of advancing the methodology and obtaining a consensus on a standard approach to water accounts, building on the results already achieved during the preparation of SEEA-2003.

35. The Eurostat Task Force on Water Accounting provided considerable inputs to the development of harmonized concepts, definitions and classifications as well as a set of standard tables. The Subgroup on Water Accounting of the London Group, which was established at the 8th London Group meeting, held in Rome from 5 to 7 November 2003, contributed text and country examples, reviewed the various versions of the draft manuscript and assisted in the finalization of the document. The Subgroup comprises 20 experts from countries, academia and international organizations.

36. Draft chapters were discussed at several meetings, including the 8th and 9th London Group meetings in Rome in 2003 and Copenhagen in 2004. A final draft was discussed and reviewed during a meeting of the Subgroup held in New York from 11 to 13 May 2005. During this meeting, the Subgroup agreed to include in the manuscript a set of standard tables for the compilation of water accounts, which countries are encouraged to compile. The status of the preparation and the final draft of SEEAW were presented at the preliminary meeting of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting, held in New York from 29 to 31 August 2005.

37. The revised final draft was presented at the User-Producer Conference, organized by the Statistics Division under the auspices of the Committee of Experts. The Conference, gathering the major users and producers of water information, endorsed SEEAW and recognized that it provides the much-needed conceptual framework for organizing hydrological and economic information in support of integrated water resource management. The Conference recommended its adoption as the international standard for water statistics by the Statistical Commission upon recommendation by the Committee of Experts.

38. Multiple information systems have been developed by the users' community to respond to ad hoc policy needs and have resulted in inconsistent information, which, in turn, has resulted in inconsistent indicators over time. The users' community valued the fact that SEEAW was developed by the statistical community, thus bringing a rigorous approach to the measurement of the interaction between the economy and the hydrological system, an important component of integrated water

resource management. The reasons for submitting SEEAW for adoption by the Statistical Commission at this time are twofold. First, the users' community has clearly expressed the needs for an agreed framework for measuring the interaction between the economy and the hydrological system. Second, adopting SEEAW would give enormous impetus to the implementation of water accounts and harmonization of data collection activities with concepts and definitions presented in SEEAW.

39. In light of the recommendations of the User-Producer Conference and the discussion during the first meeting of the Committee of Experts, held in New York on 22 and 23 June 2006, SEEAW has been revised to conform to the content and style of an international statistical standard and a fictitious dataset has been developed to populate the standard tables. SEEAW includes two parts: the first part includes agreed concepts, definitions, classifications and standard tables on physical and hybrid supply and use tables and asset accounts (chapters 1 to 6). The second part consists of those accounts that are still experimental but highly policy-relevant (chapters 7 to 9). This includes the quality accounts, the economic valuation of water beyond the 1993 System of National Accounts and examples on applications of SEEAW. Part II falls in the category of best practices.

40. A formal consultation process, held during November and December 2006, resulted in a majority view that part I of SEEAW is in principle mature enough to wear the quality label of "international statistical standard".[2] A limited number of members of the Committee advised against the adoption of SEEAW as a statistical standard at this stage for the following two reasons. It was not considered appropriate (a) to adopt as a statistical standard a subject-specific module of SEEA before the revision of SEEA-2003 is completed; and (b) to adopt one part of a manuscript as a statistical standard, with the manuscript consisting of two parts, one part containing agreed concepts, definitions, classifications and standard tables and the other containing best practices. In view of the above considerations, the Statistical Commission is invited to encourage the implementation of SEEAW in countries and to advise on whether to adopt SEEAW as a statistical standard, subject to a possible re-evaluation, taking into account the consistency in style and content of the revised SEEA-2003.

IV. Global Assessment on Environment Statistics and Environmental-Economic Accounting: results of phase I

41. As indicated in paragraph 20 above, the Global Assessment on Environment Statistics and Environmental-Economic Accounting was undertaken by the Statistics Division under the auspices of the Committee of Experts, in collaboration with the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics.

42. The Global Assessment is carried out in two phases, in order not to overburden the respondents. Phase I of the Global Assessment covers general information on the

[2] The term "international statistical standard" implies an agreement on a framework of definitions, classifications, accounts and tables to be compiled at the global level (minutes of the preliminary meeting of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting, New York, 29 to 31 August 2005).

programmes of environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting.[3] It includes questions on the institutional set-up, subject areas, constraints encountered in the development and implementation of the programmes and countries' future plans. The questionnaire of phase I of the Global Assessment is posted on the Committee of Experts' website.[4] Phase II of the Global Assessment will consist of follow-up questionnaires focusing on specific subject areas that have been identified in phase I. The questionnaires will be dispatched during the first half of 2007 only to those countries that have indicated the existence of activities in the specific subject area.

43. Phase I of the Global Assessment was dispatched on 16 October 2006 to 192 national statistical offices of member countries and 11 central banks (for those countries in which the national accounts programmes are carried out by central banks). As at 11 December 2006, about half of the countries had responded to the Assessment. A list of those countries is reported in the annex to the present report. The present report presents the main conclusion of phase I of the assessment, on the basis of the responses received. A detailed and complete analysis covering responses that will be received between 12 December 2006 and the end of January 2007 will be presented in a document at the thirty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission in February 2007. The main findings of the assessment can be summarized under the following headings: (a) institutional infrastructure; (b) scope of the programmes; and (c) impeding factors for the development and compilation of environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting.

A. Institutional infrastructure

44. Nearly every country that responded to the assessment, namely, all developed countries, countries with transition economies and a large majority of developing countries, has an environment statistics programme. The geographical distribution of the programmes ranges from a maximum of 100 per cent of countries in Europe and North America to a minimum of 75 per cent of countries in Western Asia, as shown in the table below.

45. Although the environment statistics programmes are generally dispersed across different institutions, formal or informal agreements of data-sharing are in place to ensure cooperation among institutions. The national statistical office often has a prominent role in the overall coordination, compilation and dissemination of statistics: these offices are the leading institutions for all subject areas in 43 per cent of the countries and for specific subject areas in 48 per cent of the countries and, in the remaining 9 per cent, other agencies lead the environment statistics programme.

46. Within the national statistical offices, the environment statistics programmes are mostly located in separate units: under economic statistics programmes in half of

[3] For the purposes of the assessment, an environment statistics programme is intended as a comprehensive programme (even if it is not exhaustive in terms of subject areas covered) for the provision of information on the environment as opposed to information on specific subject areas often carried out for resource management purposes by line ministries; an environmental-economic accounting programme refers to the compilation of any part/module of the accounts in physical or in monetary terms.

[4] See http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/ceea/ceeaSurvey.asp.

the countries and evenly split between being independent or belonging to agriculture and environment statistics in the other half.

47. Considering that environmental-economic accounting is a relatively new area of statistics, it is noteworthy that a considerable number of countries — about half of the countries that responded to the assessment — have an environmental-economic accounting programme. As shown in the table below, the distribution of the programme among countries varies both by economic and geographical grouping. As for the economic grouping, environmental-economic accounting programmes exist in 85 per cent of developed countries, 34 per cent of developing countries and 30 per cent of countries in transition. The geographical distribution ranges from a maximum of 72 per cent of countries in Europe to a minimum of 25 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Table
Environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting programmes in countries

		Environment statistics			*Environmental-economic accounting*		
	Number of countries	*Number of countries responding to part A*	*Number of countries with a programme*	*Percentage of responding countries*	*Number of countries responding to part B*	*Number of countries with a programme*	*Percentage of responding countries*
	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)=(3)/(2)*	*(5)*	*(6)*	*(7)=(6)/(5)*
All States Members of the United Nations	192	84	77	92	87	43	49
Economic Grouping:							
Developed	37	26	26	100	27	23	85
Transition economy	19	10	10	100	10	3	30
Developing	136	48	41	85	50	17	34
Geographical Grouping:							
Africa	53	12	10	83	13	4	31
Western Asia	17	8	6	75	9	3	33
Central, Eastern and Southern and South-Eastern Asia	30	13	12	92	12	6	50
Oceania	14	6	5	83	6	4	67
Latin America and the Caribbean	33	16	15	94	16	4	25
Northern America	2	1	1	100	2	1	50
Europe	43	28	28	100	29	21	72

Note: Phase I of the Global Assessment consists of two parts: part A on environment statistics and part B on environmental-economic accounting. Not every country responded to both parts. Hence columns (2) and (5) are different.

48. The environmental-economic accounting programme is often located within the institution that compiles national accounts — either national statistical offices or central banks — and in a few cases, it is compiled by the Ministry of Environment. Moreover, when more than one institution contributes to the compilation of the accounts, the national statistical office is often the leading agency and there always exists a formal coordination/cooperation mechanism among the institutions.

B. Scope of the programmes

49. In about half of the countries, the environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting programmes are integrated, meaning that same definitions, classifications and data collections are used in the two programmes. The areas most commonly covered by the two programmes overlap. The environment statistics programmes include, in order of importance: water, energy, air emissions and forests. In addition to those subject areas, environmental-economic accounting programmes cover environmental protection expenditure accounts. This is the result of the compilation of this information by a large number of European countries. When European countries are excluded from the analysis, mineral and energy asset accounts are the third most common subject area.

50. Nearly all the institutions compiling environment statistics or environmental-economic accounting are planning to continue the existing compilation programme. In addition, the majority of these countries are also planning to expand their programmes. In environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting, the subject areas that are most commonly identified as areas for further expansion — in terms of broadening the scope and coverage and/or starting with new compilation — include water, energy, air emissions, forests and land and ecosystems. For environmental-economic accounting, they also include material flow/waste, mineral and energy assets and environmental protection expenditure accounts. It should be noted that material flow accounts/waste accounts is a priority area mainly for European countries.

C. Impeding factors

51. The questionnaire asked respondents to identify factors impeding the development and compilation of environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting to assess the sustainability of the programmes. Countries identified the lack of human and financial resources as the most common factors impeding the development of both programmes. Data availability and data quality were considered the key constraints in the compilation.

52. The assessment showed that environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting programmes have been supported in about half of the countries by technical assistance and funding mainly from international organizations. A few are also supported and funded through bilateral cooperation projects. About half of the countries received financial assistance from Eurostat for both environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting programmes. In some countries, such programmes have also been supported through funding from national institutions other than the national statistical office.

V. Points for discussion

53. **The Statistical Commission may wish to:**

(a) Express its views on the progress of work of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting on coordination (section II.A)

and promotion and implementation of environmental-economic accounting (section II.B);

(b) Encourage the implementation in countries and to advise on whether to adopt part I of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water as an international statistical standard, subject to a possible re-evaluation, taking into account the consistency in style and content of the revised SEEA-2003 (section III).

Annex

List of countries that replied to phase I of the Global Assessment on Environment Statistics and Environmental-Economic Accounting as at 11 December 2006

Albania
Argentina
Armenia
Australia
Azerbaijan
Bahamas
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Bhutan
Bolivia
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Botswana
Brazil
Bulgaria
Burkina Faso
Cameroon
Canada
Chile
China
Colombia
Croatia
Czech Republic
Denmark
Djibouti
Dominica
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Egypt
Estonia
Finland
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Guatemala
Hungary
India
Israel
Italy
Japan
Jordan
Kenya
Kiribati
Latvia
Lesotho
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malaysia
Maldives
Mauritius
Mexico
Mongolia
Morocco
Nauru
Nepal
Netherlands
New Zealand
Norway
Papua New Guinea
Paraguay
Peru
Poland
Portugal
Republic of Korea
Romania
Saudi Arabia
Serbia
Seychelles
Singapore
Slovakia
Slovenia
South Africa
Spain
Suriname
Sweden
Switzerland
Thailand
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Turkey
Tuvalu
Ukraine
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United Republic of Tanzania
United States of America
Uruguay
Uzbekistan
Yemen